

REMEMBERING MCPHELAN REESE

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 20, 2003

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to pay tribute to a talented and endearing man who contributed so much to the community of Bonham, Texas, and to the Sam Rayburn Library in Bonham for the past quarter of a century—McPhelan Reese, who passed away this past summer at the age of 97.

Mac Reese was a fixture in Bonham as the writer-in-residence at the Sam Rayburn Library from 1975 until his retirement in 2001. He was the oldest full-time employee in The University of Texas System. Mac wrote the introduction to each chapter of Sam Rayburn's autobiography, *Speak, Mister Speaker*, and wrote the preface to the Library's collection of political cartoons, *Impressions of Mister Sam*. He was the author of two books of poetry, *Showdown* and other Poems and *Gullible's Travails* and was working on this third volume, *All About Us*, a tribute to his beloved Bonham, when failing health forced him to stop.

Born in Bonham, Mac was raised by his mother, Victoria Phelan Reese, an actress and teacher who instilled in him a love of the arts, and his grandfather, Leonidas Reese. Mac pursued singing at the Kidd-Key Conservatory in Sherman and then at the Fine Arts Academy in Cincinnati. While in Cincinnati he also trained to be a boxer at Speedy Bishop's Gym, where many of the Midwest's fighters worked out. Mac simultaneously pursued singing and boxing careers before facial injuries brought both efforts to an end. He then spent some time in Hollywood, where he played small roles in the movies and worked as a writer.

Eventually Mac moved back to Texas—first to Houston, where he worked as a master painter. In the 1970s he moved to Bonham, his hometown, following the death of his first wife, Pan Carr Reese, and his marriage to Ila Rogers Carr. In 1975 he began working at the Sam Rayburn Library as a writer-in-residence and the unofficial poet laureate of Fannin County. He delighted in telling stories and was considered by many to be Bonham's greatest storyteller. Even after retirement, he continued to come to the Library and entertain children and visitors with his many delightful stories.

Mac was a beloved and much appreciated fixture in the community and at the Sam Rayburn Library. Generations of schoolchildren and visitors to the Library will remember him with fondness, and through him they will remember and appreciate so many stories associated with Bonham. On behalf of his many friends and fans, I want to take this opportunity in the House of Representatives to pay our last respects to this beloved and colorful Texan—McPhelan Reese.

on the weekend of October 10–11–12, 2003, in Houston. The convention laid plans for the expansion of the movement to free Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence on October 7, 1987.

The convention was attended by many delegates from all around the United States and Canada. They made plans to expand their office in Washington, which has been an invaluable resource to us here in Congress in getting out information about the oppression of the Sikhs and other minorities by the Indian government. This is good to see. The glow of freedom still burns brightly in the hearts of these Sikh leaders.

The delegates also congratulated Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the International Sikh Organization and the Council of Khalistan, for his tireless work in support of the interests of Sikhs in this country and the cause of freedom for Khalistan. I can say from my personal experience that Dr. Aulakh has worked for that cause with great dedication for several years and he has provided a lot of information to those of us in Congress who are interested in the cause of human rights and freedom in South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to take this opportunity to salute the International Sikh Organization on a very successful convention and wish it continued success in the future. We can support its efforts to bring freedom to the Sikh people, as well as the other captive nations of South Asia such as Nagaland, Kashmir, and others, by stopping American aid and trade with India until human rights are observed and by declaring our support for a fair plebiscite under international monitoring on the question of independence.

I would like to place the ISO's press release on its very successful convention into the RECORD at this time.

ANNUAL CONVENTION ON KHALISTAN VERY SUCCESSFUL—PLANS TO STRENGTHEN OFFICE FORMULATED

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 14, 2003—The annual convention of the International Sikh Organization on Khalistan was very successful. Delegates from all around the United States and Canada attended. The convention was held October 10–11–12 in Houston, Texas.

The convention recognized Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the International Sikh Organization and the Council of Khalistan, for his dedication, vision, persistence, and commitment to the cause of liberating Khalistan, the independent Sikh homeland declared on October 7, 1987. Since then, it has been under Indian occupation. When India became independent, Sikhs were equal partners in the transfer of power and were to receive their own state, but the weak and ignorant Sikh leaders of the time were tricked into staying with India on the promise that they would have "the glow of freedom" and no law affecting the Sikhs would pass without their consent. Sikhs ruled an independent and sovereign Punjab from 1710 to 1716 and again from 1765 to 1849. No Sikh representative has ever signed the Indian constitution. The Council of Khalistan is the government pro tempore of Khalistan.

At the convention Dr. Bakshish Singh Sandhu of Pennsylvania and Sardar Harjinder Singh of New Jersey offered to spearhead the acquisition of a building in Washington, D.C. to house the International Sikh Organization's offices.

The delegates emphasized the need for an office in Washington to protect the interests of Sikhs in this country, as well as to work for freedom for Khalistan. An example of

this need is the video recently removed from the State Department website entitled "Terrorism: A War Without Borders" which portrayed all Sikhs as terrorists. Because of the letter by U.S. Representatives Dan Burton (R-Ind.), Edolphus Towns (D-NY), and Wally Herger (R-Cal.), the State Department recently removed this video and its text from its website. The convention passed a resolution of appreciation of these Congressmen.

Other resolutions included one asking every Gurdwara to contribute \$500 per month to the Washington office, one urging Sikhs not to support the various branches of the Akali Dal, which is under Indian government control, one calling for young Sikhs to step forward into leadership roles, and one demanding freedom for Khalistan.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. India is ruled by Hindu theocrats whose agenda is "Hindu, Hindi, Hindutva, Hindu Rashtira," or total Hindu domination of every facet of Indian life. An Indian Cabinet minister said that everyone who lives in India must be a Hindu or subservient to Hindus.

"We thank everyone who attended this important convention," Dr. Aulakh said. "Their commitment, their ideas and their support are helpful as we move forward in our work to protect the interests of Sikhs in this country and to continue working for the liberation of Khalistan," he said. "We sincerely thank and appreciate the hospitality of the Management Committee of the Houston Gurdwara. Special thanks are due to the Council advisors of the Houston area."

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 200,000 Christians since 1948, over 85,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, Dalits, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. He was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. Ghotna has never been brought to trial for the Jathedar Kaunke murder. No one has been brought to justice for the kidnapping and murder of Jaswant Singh Khalsa. According to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984!

THE HOSPITALIZED VETERANS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2003

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 20, 2003

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to correct an inequity facing America's

ANNUAL SIKH CONVENTION LAYS PLANS FOR EXPANDING FREEDOM STRUGGLE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 20, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the International Sikh Organization held its annual convention

disabled veterans. Many brave men and women, who sustained permanent injuries while defending our nation and the liberties we cherish, must spend extended periods in hospitals because of their service-connected disabilities.

When they do require extended hospital stays, disabled veterans must take time away from their jobs, causing them to lose out on the salaries they rely upon to pay their rent or mortgages and to care for their families.

Because extended care can cause financial hardships, veterans who are ordinarily rated at less than 100 percent for their service-connected disabilities qualify for a special 100 percent rating to help them compensate for their temporary financial losses.

An inequity exists in the current law, however. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not begin the temporary total disability compensation until the beginning of the month following their admission. That is, if a veteran is hospitalized on the 15th, their special compensation does not start until the first of the next month.

Even though they are incapacitated, veterans must sometimes wait almost 2 months to receive payment at the 100 percent level. Unfortunately, they still have bills due during this time and cannot always wait for several weeks for their compensation.

Today I am introducing the Hospitalized Veterans Financial Assistance Act of 2003 to correct the flaws in the law and to give America's disabled veterans our full support throughout their convalescence. Under this legislation, the VA would begin the special 100 percent disability rating on the day they are admitted to the hospital.

By making this adjustment to the law, a disabled veteran may not be faced with the difficult decision of declining medical treatment because of their financial concerns. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting those who have made the most tremendous sacrifices on our behalf by correcting this inequity.

PREMATURE BIRTH: A SILENT HEALTH CRISIS

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 20, 2003

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, premature birth is a serious and growing problem. Each day 1,305 babies are born too soon, and the rate of preterm birth increased 27 percent between 1981 and 2001. In 2001, 476,000 babies were born prematurely in the United States. Tragically, premature infants are 14 times more likely to die in their first year of life, and preterm births account for 23 percent of deaths in the first month of life. Further, premature babies who survive may suffer lifelong consequences, including cerebral palsy, mental retardation, chronic lung disease, and vision and hearing loss. Preterm delivery can happen to any pregnant woman, and in nearly one-half of the cases, no one knows why.

That is why today I am introducing, with my colleagues ANNA ESHOO, JIM RAMSTAD, SHERROD BROWN, SPENCER BACHUS, ED TOWNS, and JESSE JACKSON, Jr., the bipartisan Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early

Act, or "PREEMIE Act." The goal of the PREEMIE Act is designed to reduce the rates of preterm labor and delivery, promote the use of evidence-based care for pregnant women at risk of preterm labor and for infants born preterm, and reduce infant mortality and disabilities caused by prematurity. This will be accomplished by expanding federal research related to preterm labor and delivery and increasing public and provider education and support services. Expanding these federal initiatives is supported by the March of Dimes, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses.

We hope that you and many more of our House colleagues will join us in the fight to ensure a healthy start for all of America's children by cosponsoring and working with us for the enactment of the PREEMIE Act.

AMERICAN COMPETITION ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2003 (THE ACE ACT OF 2003)

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 20, 2003

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to introduce legislation that will protect American jobs and will create new job opportunities for those Americans in search of employment.

The American Competition Enhancement Act of 2003 would ultimately provide an across-the-board tax cut of 5 percent for all corporations. Specifically, the ACE Act will cut the corporate tax rate by 3 points in 2004, initially lowering the corporate rate to a tax level of 32 percent. Three years later, the ACE Act would cut the tax rate by an additional 2 points, lowering the rate for corporations to 30 percent in 2007.

Since 1996, our trading partners have realized that being competitive in the global marketplace requires cutting taxes of the businesses that employ their workers. Many countries, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Poland and Turkey, have cut their corporate tax rates drastically—some by 10 percent or more. In fact, the average top corporate tax rate for governments in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has dropped from a rate of 41 percent in 1986 to 30.9 percent in 2003, while the U.S. corporate rate has remained unchanged at 35 percent over the same period. When state and local taxes are added on top of this rate, the U.S. corporate tax rate averages 40 percent—which is more than 9 percentage points higher than the OECD average.

While other countries have learned that lower taxation enables them to compete for business, and ultimately jobs, the United States has failed to respond, and American workers have suffered. Many in this Congress have remained content to sit idly by as other nations have lowered corporate taxes. Instead of freeing American businesses and our workers from oppressive taxation and burdensome regulations, this Congress has continued to support efforts to make our tax code more ambiguous and difficult to navigate.

Over the past 20 years, the Congress has passed tax law that has led to the creation of

complicated and excessive rules—rules that have negatively impacted the ability of American companies to compete in the world market. These have been "defensive" responses to competition, not "offensive" responses to increasing worldwide competition. Throughout the Twentieth Century, the United States competed aggressively in the world market, and as a result our competitors responded. To remain competitive, this Congress MUST act again, and we MUST begin by reforming our tax policy that has become a choke collar on our American workers, restricting them from being free to compete with other workers in the world market.

As this Congress debates export subsidies and global competition, we will continue to hear much about the challenges faced by American manufacturers. Yet, the first and foremost challenge that American manufacturers, and all American employers, face is an increasingly restrictive and oppressive tax code. The ACE Act would address this fundamental issue and enable American workers in all sectors, including manufacturing, to once again compete in the world market. This bill would instill confidence in our manufacturing industry and would entice many other industries to operate here instead of locating overseas.

As the greatest workers in the world, there is little doubt about the outcome, if only the Congress will free our workers to compete.

Some will say that we cannot afford the ACE Act, but American workers cannot afford the alternative—continued taxation that restricts, limits and chokes their ability to compete. Some are saying that any tax legislation must be budget neutral; yet, over the last two years, the corporate income tax structure remains unchanged, and corporate revenue has only declined. In fact, Corporate Income Tax Revenue has decreased significantly—from 2000 to 2001 Corporate Income Tax Revenues fell from \$207.3 billion to \$151.1 billion, a decrease of \$56.2 billion; in 2002, Corporate Income Tax Revenue dropped to \$148 billion—a decrease of \$59.3 billion from the 2000 level. In 2 years, our corporate tax laws have resulted in lost jobs, lost dollars in American workers' pockets, and a combined loss in revenue of \$115.5 billion (See Table F-3 of the Congressional Budget Office—Budget and Economic Outlook: Fiscal Years 2004–2013).

Over the past 3 years the United States has seen a loss of 2.7 million manufacturing jobs—with an average of 60,000 job losses per month over the past 2 years. Some of these jobs have disappeared due to increased production efficiencies, but many more have been relocated overseas.

History has shown that lower taxation leads employers to keep the employees they have, to invest in capital expenditures that create new jobs, and to increase their profits which, in turn, means economic growth, more jobs, more exports, more production, and, ultimately, more dollars flowing to the Federal Treasury. Let us learn from history and pass meaningful tax relief to stimulate economic growth and, in turn, increase the funds in workers' pockets; ultimately, this would mean more dollars for the Treasury of the United States.

I urge my colleagues in this House to consider the actions of others around the world, to consider history's lessons, and, most importantly, to consider the effect of our tax code on workers in their own districts. I have considered this all and am determined that we must